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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time or place designated by the Chair in the legislative schedule within two legislative days of its being properly noticed.

The Chair will announce the Chair's designation at a later time. The Chair's determination as to whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege will be made at the time designated by the Chair for consideration of the resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, presuming that the interpretation is that this resolution is an appropriate privileged resolution, would that mean that the resolution will have to be considered within the next two days, meaning either tomorrow or Friday?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, the Speaker will designate a time on one of the next two legislative days to address the matter. At the designated time, the gentleman will be able to offer the resolution. The Chair cannot say how the House may consider it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. Davis).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that tomorrow will be an historic day for women business owners. For the first time, women business owners from a range of professions will convene on Capitol Hill to share their stories with Members of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues. My colleague, the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. KELLY], and I will cochair this unprecedented bipartisan forum, addressing

the vast growth of women-owned firms and the contrasting poor rate of procurement to these firms.

With the procurement rate to women-owned firms at less than 2 percent, the need to explore the problems women business owners are experiencing in trying to obtain Federal contracts and to develop concrete solutions to these problems has never been greater.

Over the past decade, this country has experienced an explosion in the growth of women-owned businesses. The statistics speak for themselves. Between 1987 and 1996, the number of firms owned by women grew by 78 percent, which is almost twice the rate of increase in the number of all U.S. firms, which is 47 percent. Sales increased by 236 percent, nearly \$2.3 trillion, and employment increased by 183 percent.

In the same time period, the number of minority women-owned businesses increased by 153 percent, which is three times the rate of overall business growth in the United States, the rate of employment by minority firms grew by 276 percent, and revenues rose by 318 percent.

Between 1987 and 1996, the number of Hispanic women-owned firms grew 206 percent, the number of Asian, American Indian and Alaska native women-owned firms increased by 138 percent, and the number of African-American women-owned firms increased by 135 percent.

There are now approximately 8 million women-owned firms, providing jobs for 15.5 million people and generating nearly \$1.4 trillion in sales. Women-owned businesses now employ 35 percent more people in the United States than the Fortune 500 companies employ worldwide.

Between 1987 and 1996, the industries with the fastest rate of growth for women-owned businesses were in non-traditional fields. Women-owned firms grew by 171 percent in construction, by 157 percent in wholesale trade, by 140 percent in transportation-communications, by 130 percent in agriculture, and by 112 percent in manufacturing.

In the same period, the same phenomenon of women-owned businesses growing at the fastest rate in nontraditional fields were even more astounding among minority women-owned businesses. These firms grew by 319 percent in construction, by 276 percent in wholesale trades, and by 253 percent in transportation-communications and public utilities.

Although the number of women-owned firms has grown in every State over the past several months, they have exploded in the State that I represent. In California, from 1987 to 1996 the number of women-owned firms has grown by 78 percent, employment has increased by 255 percent and sales have grown by 313 percent. Women-owned businesses now account for more than one-third of all firms in California.

As a result, California ranks first out of the 50 States in the number of

women-owned firms, first in employment and first in sales. This unprecedented growth of women-owned firms is happening in the 37th District of California, Mr. Speaker, which is my district, generating \$105 billion in the Los Angeles-Long Beach metropolitan areas.

This area ranks second out of the top 50 metropolitan areas in the number, employment and sales of women-owned firms. That sounds promising. Maybe. But, the rate of procurement for all women-owned businesses remains a meager 1.8 percent, far below the 5 percent goal which was established in 1994 by Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow this discrepancy to continue. It is only hurting the strength of this Nation's economy. We are not utilizing this hidden resource within the business community.

When the Government continues to contract with the same large companies, America's taxpayers lose money, because when various agencies select their bid without real competition, it is highly unlikely that that bid is indeed the least expensive, more effective way of getting the job done.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I speak for millions of women business owners throughout the country. I ask that we recognize that tomorrow will be an historic day for women as we continue to grapple with the notion of women business owners and the lack of procurement and meeting the goals Congress has established.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. EWING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. NEUMANN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Ms. KILPATRICK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. KILPATRICK addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia [Ms. MCKINNEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DIAZ-BALART] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DIAZ-BALART addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BILBRAY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BILBRAY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

COMMEMORATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF EMANCIPATION OF AFRICANS HELD IN SLAVERY IN THE DANISH WEST INDIES—THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands [Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues and fellow Americans that July 3, 1998 will be the 150th anniversary of the emancipation of Africans held in slavery in the Danish West Indies, now the United States Virgin Islands, the district which I represent in the 105th Congress.

Mr. Chairman, there are few moments in human history as dramatic and inspiring as those that took place in the town of Frederiksted in St. Croix on the 2d and 3d of July, 1848. The story is one of courage and determination on the part of a people to live free and risk death in the process.

Historians tell us that at the sound of the conchshell, the unfree from

across St. Croix converged on the fort under the leadership of Moses Gottlieb, who was called General Buddhoe. Their threat was to burn the island unless immediate freedom was obtained.

In response to reports of the uprising, Danish Governor Peter Von Scholten rushed from the town of Christiansted to confront the angry men and women who had assembled and who had established a 4 p.m. deadline for his declaration of emancipation.

Surrounded and outnumbered during his ride down King Street on his way to Fort Frederick, and encouraged by his mulatto mistress, Anna Haggaard, the Governor issued his famous proclamation: "All unfree in the Danish West Indies are from this day free." He later repeated his statement from the ramparts of Fort Christiansvern.

Although the revolt ended with little loss of property or life due mostly to the efforts of General Buddhoe, its key players paid a high price. General Buddhoe himself was arrested and sent away on a Danish man-o-war never to be heard from again. Governor Von Scholten returned to Denmark where he was tried and found guilty of exceeding his authority and dereliction of duty.

Mr. Speaker, the events of July 3d, 1848 are considered the second act of self-determination by Virgin Islanders, the first being the uprising in St. John in 1733, which brought that island under African rule for 6 months.

So July 3d of each year is designated Emancipation Day, and commemorates this most important and significant event in our history.

Mr. Speaker, it is also a significant event in the history of our great Nation, because it was the first such proclamation on what would later become American soil, coming 15 years before President Abraham Lincoln would issue his famous Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in the Confederate States during the Civil War.

There is irony as well as fate in the fact that Emancipation Day precedes the 4th of July, the day when America celebrates its independence. These twin days of celebration bind Virgin Islanders and all Americans to an eternal commitment to human freedom.

We of this generation are heirs to Valley Forge and Frederiksted and the great tradition of sacrifice and suffering in the cause of freedom. Future generations must bless and cherish the memory of General George Washington and General Buddhoe and keep the fires of freedom burning.

To recognize this great event, the Governor of the Virgin Islands has issued a proclamation calling for a month-long celebration beginning June 1, 1998 to July 5, 1998, culminating in a week-long observance from June 29, 1998 to July 5, 1998.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of this I will shortly introduce a resolution in the House and seek the support of my colleagues in recognizing the 150th anniversary of the emancipation of my

ancestors. I invite all Americans to join us in observance of this proud moment in American and Virgin Island history.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. RUSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RUSH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. SNYDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, once again, my thanks to the staff here who are working late, as several of us have an opportunity to discuss these important issues.

Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion and the opinion of a great many Americans that while we live in the greatest democracy in the history of the world, our democracy and the way we currently conduct our business has some major problems. Specifically, how do we do our campaigns? How do we elect our officials to come to Washington and do the people's business?

Now, what is the specific problem? I will show my colleagues what the specific problem is. This is going to be a difficult number for me to read, because I do not know what this number is. I recognize \$999,999. I can go one step further, \$999,999,999. I can keep going to \$999,999,999,999, and on and so. The reality is, whatever number this is, it is now legal for this amount of money to be donated to a political party, to a national political party. So if a person who had this kind of wealth wrote out a check to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party, it is completely legal to make this kind of donation and it not be disclosed where the money came from.

Well, many of us in this House, many of us in America, think that is the wrong way to finance campaigns, and on January 11, 1995, the President and the Speaker of the House, in a very famous garden shot, shook hands and committed themselves to campaign finance reform. Since that time, we have not seen much action.

The President is firmly committed to signing meaningful campaign finance reform, and as someone from Arkansas who was in the State Senate and worked with then Governor Clinton when he was in Arkansas, I know of his commitment to campaign finance reform and ethics reform. He had an experience when he was in Arkansas of calling a special session of the legislature in order to get ethics reform for lobbyists' disclosure, having that effort thwarted in the State legislature in the committee vote when that was the sole purpose of calling the session; and he took the issue to the States and initiated that to get signatures working in